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ABSTRACT

The report presents information about client families and their farms during their contact with the Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation (RFFR) project from March 1, 1969 to June 30, 1971. Data are from 450 family case histories which include 2,089 members. Most were from northern Vermont. Families averaged 4.64 persons each, about 1 more than the average Vermont farm family. Nearly 2/3 of the homes had at least 1 member who had a disability or employment handicap. Physical examinations showed that dental problems were the leading cause. Family members aged 25 and over had received a median of 9 years of schooling. The median age of members, 21.4, was about 4 years lower than that for the state's farm population as a whole. Three-fourths of the families had an income of less than $2,000 a year. Eighty-seven percent of the male household heads were farmers. The contact agency mentioned most frequently by client families prior to involvement with the RFFR project was the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. After association with this project, the agricultural county extension agent had the greatest number of contacts on referral by program aides. Referrals to the RFFR project were successfully rehabilitated and placed in employment in 32 percent of the cases. (Author)

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VERMONT RURAL AND FARM FAMILY REHABILITATION PROJECT

A Benchmark Report

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Cooperative Project With

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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This report presents information about client families and their farms during their contact with the Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project from March 1, 1969, to June 30, 1971. Data are from 450 family case histories which include 2,089 members. Most were from northern Vermont. Families averaged 4.64 persons each, about one more than the average Vermont farm family. Nearly two-thirds of the homes had at least one member who had a disability or employment handicap. Physical examinations showed that dental problems were the leading cause. Family members, aged 25 and over, had received a median of 9 years of schooling. The median age of members, 21.4, was about 4 years lower than that for the state's farm population as a whole. Three-fourths of the families had an income of less than $2,000 a year. Eighty-seven percent of the male household heads were farmers. The contact agency mentioned most frequently by client families prior to involvement with the RFFR Project was the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA. After association with this project, the agricultural county Extension agent had the greatest number of contacts on referral by program aides. Referrals to the RFFR Project were successfully rehabilitated and placed in employment in 32 percent of the cases.

Key words: Poverty, farm-family, household-income, land-use, attitudes, program-effectiveness, community-services, program-evaluation, social-action-programs, government-services, sociology, social economics, adjustments, development, level-of-living, social-service.

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VERMONT RURAL AND FARM FAMILY REHABILITATION PROJECT

E. H. Tompkins, N. L. LeRay, and F. E. Schmidt[1]

INTRODUCTION

Rural poverty is significant throughout New England and the Northeast. Regional Research Project NE-68, "Paths Out of Poverty," was designed (1) to examine the relationship between impoverished families and community and governmental services, (2) to find out why these services have not enabled families to climb out of poverty, and (3) to synthesize the findings into a general body of knowledge to guide the implementation of more effective socioeconomic intervention programs. Using guidelines developed by the Technical Committee for NE-68, "Paths Out of Poverty," each participating researcher in the regional project studied existing programs operated by agencies in his state.

The Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project (RFFRP) was selected for study in Vermont. This report describes the RFFRP and its method of operation. It also presents basic information about a sample of families and their farms during their contact with the project.

Poverty is significant among rural Vermont families. The 1970 Census of Population shows that of the 107,411 Vermont families, 9,732 or 9 percent had total incomes below the poverty level. Over 7,000 of these low-income families were located in rural areas. The incidence of poverty was highest among farm families, 13 percent; lowest among urban families, 8 percent; while 9 percent of the rural nonfarm families had incomes less than the poverty level (4, Table 58).

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THE PROJECT

The Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project grew out of an earlier experimental and demonstration program called the Vermont Farm Family Project (1). It was carried out under a contract between the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Manpower Policy, Evaluation and Research, and the State of Vermont. Initiated in October 1964 as an aid to low-income farm families, it functioned mainly as a counseling and referral service. But it also provided for on-the-job training in local establishments for a minimum of 50 workers. The families received advice from farm family counselors and were referred to appropriate state and federal agencies for further assistance. The counselors effectively motivated their clients to use various services available to them.

On December 16, 1968, the Farm Family Project was combined with a Vocational Rehabilitation component and the name was changed to the Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project (hereafter referred to as RFFRP). The change in setup was brought about under a contract between the State Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Supervision of the project was transferred to the Vermont Extension Service on March 1, 1969. By mid-July of that year it was fully implemented. Phase I of the RFFRP ended February 28, 1972.[2]

The Vermont RFFRP provided both outreach and counseling services to low-income rural families engaged in agriculture or in agriculturally related occupations. It also provided vocational rehabilitation to individual members of the family or other members of the household. One criterion for acceptance in the project was that the net annual income, available for family use, did not exceed $2,000. Also, at least one family member must have had an identifiable disability that limited vocational abilities or potential.

Area offices were established in St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, Rutland, and Woodstock. Each office was staffed by a farm family rehabilitation aide, a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and an office secretary.

Project aides were trained to actively seek out and identify needy farm families (1). After locating a family, an aide's first step was to identify and document the family's qualifications for enrollment in the project.

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[2]Phase II was activated March 15, 1972, for work with public assistance clients under a contract between the University of Vermont Extension Service and the Department of Rehabilitation, Vermont Agency of Human Services.

At his first contact with the farm family, the aide explained that the program was one of rehabilitation. The full range of services was available only to rural families where at least one person had a disability. If the family was found eligible, the prospective client was asked to sign an application for assistance. Next, the project team--vocational rehabilitation counselor and farm family rehabilitation aide--initiated a diagnostic study. The farm family aide analyzed the family's potential for employment. He also evaluated the farm (including land, buildings, and related resources) to determine its potential as an employment opportunity. During this analysis, counseling and consultative services were drawn upon from other appropriate sources and agencies. Help was solicited for developing the potential of the farm, its land, and the family members. This was done to establish the existence of an employment opportunity for the client who was being evaluated. During the diagnostic study, no project funds were spent to buy goods or services in connection with farm development.

The project aide used the "Problem Form" during this evaluation to record the farm and family problems and needs as the client recognized them.[3] This process often was a step-by-step procedure. That is, the recognition of problems by the client would often change to a marked degree as the project team and client progressed toward a final "Problem Form" and solutions.

During this evaluation, the client was referred to appropriate agencies for the handling of acute problems and for developing the basis for the adoption of a farm development plan. The project aide routinely referred the farm operator or other family members to his teammate, the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

While the aide analyzed the farm and identified its problems, the counselor carried on the medical and vocational evaluation of family members. Clients had complete physical examinations to determine their eligibility for vocational rehabilitation. This was frequently followed by one or more special examinations if needed. The evaluation might also involve psychological and aptitude testing. As soon as the nature of the impairment was identified, the counselor and the aide conferred on the findings. This was to insure that the eventual plan, either for training, farm improvement, or placement, would not conflict with any handicaps.

During this second step, the client knew that his total situation was being studied. Even if no significant physical or mental impairment was found and the family was not eligible for rehabilitation

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[3] Forms used by the RFFRP are available upon request from the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Vermont, Burlington 05401.

services, at least the needs of the family would have been identified. And the family would also know what resources could be sought from other agencies to meet those needs. Eligibility was occasionally denied on the basis of disabilities too severe to permit any substantial employment.

Method of Analysis

The Vermont RFFRP had data on 450 client family cases which were completed and closed during the period of March 1, 1969, to June 30, 1971. Not all these families were eligible for rehabilitation services, but some data were collected from all of them. Provision was made to collect information on personal history, training, other agencies counseling the family, sources and amounts of income, indebtedness, interests and desires of the family members, their vocational potentials, and data on the operation of their farm.

This report presents these data in a format for program administrators, and provides a benchmark for individuals conducting research related to this project. Presentation of descriptive information below uses two strategies. First, aggregated socioeconomic information pertaining to the 450 families is given. These records are compiled from the case histories and are presented in both tabular and written form. Occasionally, information is used in the text but is not included in the tables. Detailed tabulations are available upon request from the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station.

A second strategy for understanding the relationship of program activities to the impoverished farm family is reflected in our use of case studies. These were compiled from program records and aide-constructed field interviews.

Many of the case history forms were lacking individual items of data of one sort or another. Either the aide failed to ask the question or neglected to enter the information on the form. In some cases, a space for the data may have been left blank when the answer was "no" or where some piece of equipment or type of animal or crop was not present on the farm. No attempt was made to interpret these blanks. Percentages were computed only on the basis of definite data. The number of cases of "no data" are indicated at the bottom of each table.

Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project Clients

Selected demographic characteristics of individuals involved in the Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project are presented in this section. Emphasis is placed upon age, education, health, occupation history, sex, and location, because these factors individually and collectively determine to a high degree the possible paths out of poverty that are available to both individuals and families.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Most of the client families lived in northern Vermont (Figure 1). The greatest number from a single county was from Orange County, which had 78 families or 17 percent of the total. Other high-ranking counties were Franklin and Orleans, each accounting for 16 percent. Eleven percent were from Caledonia County.

One-third of the families lived less than 1 1/2 miles from the nearest village or city. Seven out of 10 lived within 2 1/2 miles from town; 9 out of 10, within 3 1/2 miles. None had to travel over 7 1/2 miles.

Ninety percent of the farmers and nearly two-thirds of the farm wives had motor vehicle operator's licenses.

Records showed that 99 percent of the families lived on their farm. Most (64 percent) had begun operating this particular farm between 1950 and 1969. The largest single group (43 percent) began operating the farm during the 1960's.

To determine their interest in farming, we asked clients if they were interested in selling their farm. Ninety-one percent answered "No." Most (96 percent) were not interested in renting their farm either. Three out of four said they hadn't recently thought of giving up farming. Of the 88 people who were interested in giving up farming, 61 percent gave age or health as their main reasons. The next most common problem was "low return on investment," with 26 percent giving this response.

More than 9 out of 10 (93 percent) had made no plans for retirement. Of the 30 who had made plans for retiring, four had already retired before 1969. Ten planned to retire during 1969. Nine planned to retire sometime between 1970 and 1975. The remaining seven gave no definite date. Only 29 percent said another family member, usually the son, would be interested in operating the farm if the present operator retired.

Nearly half (49 percent) carried some form of life insurance. Only 17 percent had a mortgage insurance contract as part of their insurance program. Two-thirds had a family hospital insurance contract.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

The 450 households from which data were collected had 2,089 individual members or an average of 4.64 persons. The 1970 census reports that Vermont households averaged 3.21 persons, rural households averaged 3.31 persons, and farm households averaged 3.90 (4). Thus, RFFRP families contained almost one person more than the average Vermont rural or farm household.

Figure 1. Location of R&FFR Project client families and field offices.

28/6 = Number/Percent

X = Field Office

The majority, 55 percent, of client households had four or fewer members. But the two-person household was the largest group, 18 percent of the total. Seven percent had only one person. Eighteen households had 10 or more members and the largest contained 15 persons.

Before farm mechanization, a large farm family was considered an asset. Today this is no longer true, especially if there are many young children. Large households tend to aggravate the poverty situation since there are more mouths to feed and bodies to clothe.

Sex

Males comprised 54 percent of the household members. The 1970 Census of Population shows a similar breakdown of farm population by sex (4).

The sex ratio of client household members was 116 males per 100 females. This compares with the 1970 census figure of 108 males per 100 females for the farm population of the state.

Status and Family Role

Male household heads accounted for 423 or 20 percent of the household members. Female household heads accounted for only 1 percent of the individuals. Seventeen percent of the household population were wives of male household heads. In other words, 362 (86 percent) of the male heads were married and their wives were present in the home. Children of the household heads made up the largest group of members, as might be expected. Very few were adopted or foster children.

Parents of the husband were more frequently reported than those of the wife. The ratio was more than three to one.

Marital Status

Of the 2,089 household members served by the project, 2,007 gave their age. Of these, 1,292 (64 percent) were 14 years or older. This is the group for which the Census of Population gives a breakdown of marital status by sex. Using a similar breakdown we can compare project household members with the state's rural population as a whole.

In our RFFRP households, single males outnumbered single females 293 to 155, a ratio of 189 males per 100 females. If widowed, divorced, or separated individuals were included, the ratio would be 150 to 100, or one and one-half males per female. This means that the men of these households might have a hard time finding a wife among their peers in rural areas.

Compared to males, nearly three times as many females were widowed, divorced, or separated. Many were widows, because of the longer life expectancy of women.

Compared with 1970 census data for Vermont rural households, a much higher percentage of project males were single. There was less difference in the female population.

Compared to rural males in general, only half as many RFFRP males were widowed, divorced, or separated. The same category of females made up 9 percent of the project women, compared with 15 percent of all rural females 14 years or over.

Health

Most household members (76 percent) thought they were in good health; 17 percent said their health was fair. Only 7 percent felt they were in poor health.

One of the requirements for getting help from this rehabilitation project was that some member of the household have a disability or employment handicap. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of those households contacted met this requirement. The remainder didn't recognize any problem at the time.

Back trouble was the specific health problem most frequently mentioned (by 13 percent). Heart trouble affected 11 percent of the ailing household members. Next in rank were eye trouble, arthritis, and dental problems.

Back trouble was also the leading complaint among self-recognized disabilities or handicaps of the farm operators (29 percent). Heart trouble was recognized by 18 percent. Leg ailments ranked third.

Handicapped or disabled household members were referred to physicians for a complete physical examination. Reports from these examinations show that dental problems were the leading causes of handicap or disability, 14 percent of the clients (Table 1). Closely following were those with heart trouble, back pains, and pulmonary, respiratory, and allergic problems.

Education

Fifty-five percent of household members over 25 had completed one or more years of high school. High school graduates accounted for 30 percent. Seventy percent had attended college for one or more years, but only 1 percent had completed college. The median years of schooling was nine. Comparable figures from the 1970 census are 11 years for farm males and 12 years for females (4).

Clients were asked if they, or any members of their household, had received any special form of education or training before contact with RFFRP. Data from this question were combined with those on training received as the result of RFFRP effort. Table 2 shows the special

Table 1. Disabilities as Listed on RFFRP General Medical Reports, About February 1, 1970[a]

Disability	Clients	
	Number	Percent
Dental	25	14
Cardiac	22	12
Back pain	19	10
Pulmonary, respiratory, and allergic	18	10
Arthritis	12	7
Circulatory (includes high blood pressure and varicose veins)	12	7
Visual	11	6
Neurological	7	4
Leg or arm impairments (includes amputations)	7	4
Hernia	6	3
Mental illness (includes anxiety and depression)	5	3
Mental retardation	5	3
Gastrointestinal	5	3
Obesity	5	3
Diabetes	4	2
Hearing	4	2
Alcoholism	3	2
No impairment	4	2
Miscellaneous (1 each)	7	4
Total	181	100[b]

[a]Does not indicate eligibility has been determined.

[b]Does not add to 100 because of rounding.

Table 2. Special Form of Education or Training Received by Household Members

Education or training received	Persons	
	Number	Percent
Farm machinery repair	31	11
College	25	9
Adult education, unspecified	23	8
GI training	22	8
Christmas tree byproducts	21	7
Christmas tree production	20	7
General agriculture	20	7
High school equivalency	14	5
Nursing	12	4
Farm management	12	4
Mechanics and repair	11	4
Teacher training	9	3
Dairy herd management	8	3
Manpower development and training program	6	2
Trade school	6	2
On-the-job training	5	2
Bookkeeping and farm recordkeeping	5	2
Carpentry and woodworking	5	2
Welding	5	2
Nurse's aide	3	1
Forest management	3	1
Baking	3	1
Plumbing and heating	3	1
Carpentry and mechanics	2	1
Child care	2	1
Army	2	1
Quarrying	2	1
Cattle culling	1	--a
Homemaking and management	1	--a
Home budgeting	1	--a
Sewing	1	--a
Watchmaking	1	--a
Blacksmithing	1	--a
Total	286	100
None	1,576	
No data	227	

[a]Less than 0.51 percent.

education or training these people received either before or after contact with this project. Only 14 percent of the household members had received such education. Farm machinery repair led the list with 11 percent of the people participating. College education ranked second. Apparently many did not think of college as a special form of education; only 25 mentioned it, compared to the 65, in another section, who said they had completed some college work. Adult education (unspecified) ranked third and GI training fourth. Seven percent had received special training in using Christmas tree byproducts, such as wreath making. The same proportion had been trained in Christmas tree production and in general agriculture.

They were asked if they, or other members of the household, would be interested in training for either on- or off-farm employment. Only one in four was interested.

Age

Data on age were given for 2,000 household members. These clients were younger, on the average, than farm residents in general. Their median age was 21.4 years (Table 3), compared with the 1970 census figure of 25.5 for the state's farm population (4). Ages varied from less than 1 year to 91. Four out of 10 (41 percent) were under 18 years. This group is comparable to the 1970 farm population of the state. But those 21 years and over made up only 50.8 percent of the clients, compared to 54.6 percent for the state's farm population. A lower proportion of the RFFRP population was age 65 and over than for the state farm population as a whole. The percentages were 6.6 and 8.0, respectively.

AGENCY CONTACT

One of the roles of RFFRP has been to provide linkages between the rural or farm family and the various local, state, and federal agencies designed to assist them, or others that might have capabilities for assistance. Records maintained by project personnel show the agencies and organizations that have, at some time, worked with each family.

The agency that had already been most in contact with the client families was the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Table 4). This agency had contacted 24 percent of the 450 farm households. The Vermont State Farm Bureau, Inc., ranked second, with 15 percent. Closely following was the USDA Soil Conservation Service, with 14 percent.

Leading the list of agencies, organizations, or individuals to which the RFFRP referred families is their agricultural county Extension agent. These agents received 1,276 or 24 percent of all referrals--not surprising since this agent is well trained for working with farm families.

Table 3. Age of Household Members

Age (years)	Members	
	Number	Percent
Under 5	107	5.4
5 to 9	243	12.2
10 to 14	310	15.5
15 to 19	281	14.0
20 to 24	156	7.8
25 to 29	96	4.8
30 to 34	90	4.5
35 to 39	117	5.8
40 to 44	102	5.1
45 to 49	104	5.2
50 to 54	101	5.0
55 to 59	90	4.5
60 to 64	72	3.6
65 to 69	56	2.8
70 to 74	35	1.8
75 to 79	20	1.0
80 to 84	9	0.4
85 and over	11	0.6
Total	2,000	100.0
No data	89	
Under 18	829	41.4
21 and over	1,016	50.8
65 and over	131	6.6
Median age	21.4	

Table 4. Household Member Contacts with Agencies or Organizations

Agency or organization	Households already contacted	Referrals by RFFRP
Extension Agent (agriculture)	26	1,276
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service	109	736
Soil Conservation Service	63	702
County Forester	23	521
Employment Security Department	0	396
Farm Bureau	68	209
Social Welfare Department	30	194
Agriculture Department, State	0	150
Extension Service (UVM)	0	149
United Farmers Organization	13	132
Extension Agent (home economics)	3	127
Vocational Rehabilitation Service	4	63
Manpower Development and Training	--[a]	60
Production Credit Association	13	55
Legal Aid	--[a]	51
Extension Agent (youth)	16	47
Social Security Department	8	47
Adult Education (unspecified)	0	45
Grange (P of H)	8	44
Education Department, State (adult education)	0	35
Dairy Herd Improvement Association	0	26
Future Farmers of America	3	22
Farmers Home Administration	9	17
Bank (local)	1	17
Education Department, State	0	17
Office of Economic Opportunity	5	15
Agway	--[a]	14
Local business cooperative	--[a]	9
Veterans Administration	--[a]	7
Extension Nutrition Aide	--[a]	7
Adult Education (local school)	0	7
Food Stamp Program	6	6
Fish and Game Department	0	6
Medicaid	--[a]	5
On-the-job training	--[a]	4
Private attorney	--[a]	4
Local business or industry	--[a]	3
Health Department, State	0	2
Local business (advice giving)	--[a]	2
Town clerk	--[a]	2
Creamery Field Service	--[a]	1
Federal Land Bank	0	1
Forests and Parks Department, State	0	1
Local schools	--[a]	1
Vermont Technical College	0	1
Electronic Farm Accounting (ELFAC)	0	1
Total	408	5,237

[a]No data.

He has much expertise on farm management and can show farmers how to improve crop and livestock production and marketing to increase their income.

The USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service ranked second (14 percent). This agency administers a program that "provides cost-sharing assistance to farmers in implementing soil, water, woodland, and wildlife conservation practices on farmlands now in agricultural production" (6).

The USDA Soil Conservation Service held third place with 13 percent of the referrals. This agency provides farmers with a soil and water conservation plan adapted to each individual farm.

County foresters from the State Department of Forests and Parks accounted for 10 percent of the referrals. They provided assistance in woodland management and in the marketing of forest products. Instruction was given on Christmas tree growing and marketing and in making Christmas wreaths.

Household Members Referred

Two-thirds of the referrals were made for the good of both the family and the farm (Table 5). Referrals for the good of the family but not the farm (for example, where the person or family was advised to seek off-farm employment), made up 6 percent of the total. Referrals of the head of household, or farm operator only, accounted for 13 percent. Those involving only the housewife made up 8 percent; both husband and wife, 2 percent; and children, 5 percent.

The person involved, or the purpose of referrals, varied somewhat among agencies and organizations. Referrals for the good of both the farm and the family were most commonly made to RFFRP, the agricultural Extension agent, and the Soil Conservation Service.

Referrals for the good of the family but not of the farm were most common among contacts with the State Social Welfare Department. These were usually for obtaining food stamps.

Household heads and farm operators were most often referred to the State Department of Employment Security.

Housewives were generally referred to the county Extension home economist.

Most child referrals were to the county Extension agent for youth work. Cases in which both husband and wife were involved generally went to the State Department of Employment Security.

Table 5. Household Members Referred to Agency or Organization

Agency or organization		General, for good of farm and family	General, for good of family but not farm	Household head or operator only	Wife only	Children (one or more)	Husband and wife
				Number of households			
Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project		374	48	11	4	2	2
Extension Agent (agriculture)		316	1	13	3	2	0
Agr. Stabilization and Conservation Service		267	0	5	0	0	0
Soil Conservation Service		300	0	5	0	0	0
County Forester		167	0	4	0	0	0
Employment Security Department		9	9	102	26	22	20
Farm Bureau		111	0	11	0	0	0
Social Welfare Department		6	69	13	6	7	1
Agriculture Department, State		93	0	1	0	0	0
Extension Service (UVM)		55	9	5	6	0	0
United Farmers Organization		81	0	44	0	0	0
Extension Agent (home economics)		4	0	1	115	0	0
Vocational Rehabilitation Service		3	4	18	2	2	3
Manpower Development and Training		2	1	21	8	2	3
Production Credit Association		42	2	0	0	0	0
Legal Aid		18	10	4	1	0	0
Extension Agent (youth)		0	4	1	3	49	0
Social Security Department		2	15	14	6	2	2
Adult Education (unspecified)		0	0	11	8	6	4
Grange (P of H)		7	8	17	1	0	4
Education Department, State (adult education)		0	0	12	4	1	5
Dairy Herd Improvement Association		19	0	0	0	0	0
Future Farmers of America		2	1	3	0	18	0
Farmers Home Administration		189	7	2	0	1	0
Bank (local)		7	1	1	0	3	0
Education Department, State		0	0	5	2	3	0
Office of Economic Opportunity		4	7	2	2	2	0
Agway		14	0	0	0	0	0
Local business cooperative		9	0	0	0	0	0
Veterans Administration		0	0	5	0	2	0
Extension Nutrition Aide		0	4	0	3	0	0
Adult Education (local school)		0	0	3	1	2	1
Food Stamp Program		1	6	0	1	1	1
Medicaid		0	1	2	1	1	0
Other		13	2	2	0	5	0
Total	2,603	1,741	161	327	199	131	44
Percent	100	66	6	13	8	5	2

Year of First Contact

Most of the first-time contacts with an agency or organization took place during 1969 (38 percent of the total) and were probably the result of RFFRP efforts (Table 6). The year 1970 ranked second with 15 percent of the recorded first contacts. Those with RFFRP followed a similar pattern to contacts for all agencies.

Purpose of Referrals

Most referrals (782) of RFFRP households to various agencies and organizations were made for consultation and evaluation (Table 7). Other purposes included 482 referrals for informational purposes; 376 for formal training; 372 for small projects; 363 for loans, social security benefits, and food stamps; 253 for membership; and 106 for medical or legal aid.

Sixty-nine households had referrals for major projects which sometimes included help in getting off the farm. Job placement referrals involved only 39 households.

Referrals to RFFRP were mainly for consultation and evaluation. Small projects ranked second and medical or legal aid, third.

Result of Referrals

Referrals to RFFRP were handled successfully in 92 percent of the cases. In nearly 4 percent the client was offered aid but refused it. No need for services was found (or else the household did not meet project requirements) in 2 percent of the households. In only 0.5 percent did the client apply for assistance but was found ineligible. One householder at first refused to apply, but later applied for assistance with no result noted.

For all other agencies and organizations as a whole, 95 percent of the referrals were successful. In only 2 percent did the household member complete the training but not use it. The client applied but was refused in only 2 percent of the referrals; he was offered aid but refused it in only 0.5 percent. In five of the households, a client originally refused to apply but later applied with no result reported. Four clients were accepted but didn't attend the training session or whatever was planned for them. In three cases, the household member applied for aid, was rejected, but tried again and was accepted.

During this project, from March 1, 1969, to February 29, 1972, the following accomplishments were noted:

Of the 843 persons referred to the project, 268 (32 percent) were physically (or mentally) rehabilitated, given training where necessary,

Table 6. Year of First Contact with (or Referral to) Agency or Organization

Agency or organization		Year								
		1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1960-1965	1950-1960	Before 1950
		Number of households								
Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project		35	63	246	25	13	26	34	0	0
Extension Agent (agriculture)		21	39	156	12	17	17	31	22	17
Agr. Stabilization and Conservation Service		7	17	53	20	13	18	53	43	38
Soil Conservation Service		8	32	109	19	19	17	44	30	23
County Forester		2	24	56	9	11	15	26	17	9
Employment Security Department		17	81	82	8	0	0	0	0	1
Farm Bureau		1	0	17	6	5	4	36	27	19
Social Welfare Department		16	35	27	7	2	3	3	0	0
Agriculture Department, State		2	14	22	23	15	12	6	0	0
Extension Service (UVM)		9	17	28	7	8	4	2	1	0
United Farmers Organization		1	7	22	12	7	1	28	20	21
Extension Agent (home economics)		2	5	35	7	11	13	18	20	6
Vocational Rehabilitation Service		0	9	27	2	0	0	0	0	0
Manpower Development and Training		0	4	8	13	9	3	1	0	0
Production Credit Association		2	3	13	2	1	1	2	1	1
Legal Aid		2	6	21	1	1	2	0	0	0
Extension Agent (youth)		1	4	12	3	3	5	14	3	0
Social Security Department		2	11	17	5	3	1	3	0	0
Adult Education (unspecified)		2	6	5	8	9	1	0	0	0
Grange (P of H)		0	5	5	4	2	0	12	4	4
Education Department, State (adult education)		2	6	6	7	3	0	0	0	0
Dairy Herd Improvement Association		2	0	10	4	1	1	1	0	0
Future Farmers of America		0	1	6	4	0	3	6	2	0
Farmers Home Administration		13	32	88	6	8	13	19	4	1
Bank (local)		3	3	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
Education Department, State		2	2	5	1	1	0	0	0	0
Office of Economic Opportunity		4	3	9	0	0	1	0	0	0
Agway		2	1	9	0	1	1	0	0	0
Local business cooperative		2	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Veterans Administration		2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Extension Nutrition Aide		0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Education (local school)		1	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
Food Stamp Program		3	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0
Medicaid		0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Other		2	3	11	6	2	1	3	0	0
Total	2,968	168	440	1,122	231	165	164	344	194	140
Percent of total	100[a]	6	15	38	8	6	6	12	7	5

[a]Do not add to 100 because of rounding.

Table 7. Major Purposes for Which Clients Were Referred to Agencies or Organizations

Agency or organization	Purpose of referral								
	Member-ship	Consult or evaluate	Infor-mation	Formal train-ing	Job place-ment	Medical or legal aid	Small pro-ject	Finan-cial assist-ance[a]	Major pro-ject[b]
	Number of households								
Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project	0	214	9	27	7	52	87	4	31
Extension Agent (agriculture)	0	171	74	43	1	1	32	2	6
Soil Conservation Service	3	155	17	1	0	0	92	1	4
Agr. Stabilization and Conservation Service	11	34	119	0	0	0	45	4	1
Farmers Home Administration	0	5	7	0	0	0	5	168	7
Employment Security Department	2	4	4	150	22	0	1	5	0
County Forester	0	99	15	13	0	1	24	0	5
United Farmers Organization	101	4	3	0	0	0	2	0	0
Farm Bureau	25	5	64	0	0	0	0	0	0
Extension Agent (home economics)	42	4	62	3	0	0	2	0	0
Social Welfare Department	0	9	5	0	1	7	1	77	1
Agriculture Department, State	0	12	45	0	0	0	27	1	8
Extension Service (UVM)	1	37	15	11	0	4	4	0	2
Extension Agent (youth)	27	4	14	0	0	0	8	0	0
Production Credit Association	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	37	1
Social Security Department	0	2	5	0	0	1	0	36	0
Vocational Rehabilitation Service	0	2	1	17	2	3	0	0	0
Manpower Development and Training	0	1	0	34	1	0	1	0	0
Grange (P of H)	27	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legal Aid	0	2	1	0	0	27	0	0	1
Adult Education (unspecified)	0	0	0	30	1	0	0	0	0
Future Farmers of America	14	0	8	1	0	0	0	0	0
Education Department, State (adult education)	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0
Dairy Herd Improvement Association	0	5	0	0	0	0	14	0	0
Office of Economic Opportunity	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	2	2
Agway	0	3	1	0	0	0	10	0	0
Bank (local)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
Education Department, State	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0
Food Stamp Program	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	0
Local business cooperative	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	0	0
Adult Education (local school)	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
Extension Nutrition Aide	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Veterans Administration	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	0
Medicaid	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0
Other	0	6	7	3	3	3	5	1	1
Total	253	782	482	376	39	106	372	363	69

[a] Includes Social Security benefits and food stamps.

[b] Includes help in getting off the farm.

and placed in employment. Thirty-three cases (4 percent) had to be closed before a rehabilitation plan could be initiated. Seventeen (2 percent) were closed after a plan had been developed but before it could be carried out. Not all of the referrals applied for project services--218 cases (26 percent) were closed without an application. Others who applied for services but were found ineligible or failed to cooperate totaled 255 clients (30 percent). The remaining clients were transferred to the state Vocational Rehabilitation Division for further services when the project was closed.

While this project was in operation, farm development plans were made for 115 clients. These plans were drawn up jointly by counselor, aide, and farmer to provide solutions to needs and problems as seen by them. Such a plan considers financial needs; dairy herd health and management; water supply; land management; farm buildings (size and condition); sources of supplemental income; personal needs (health, training, job placement, social security, social welfare, rehabilitation); field crop management and marketing; woodland management; machinery and equipment adequacy and maintenance; and farm safety and appearance.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

One of the requirements for formal acceptance into RFFRP was a family income under $2,000. After the project aide had established rapport with the apparently needy family, he would ask the household head how much gross and net income the family had received recently.

Three-fourths of the households had incomes under $2,000 a year (Table 8). More than half received less than $1,000. The median income amounted to $900.

Table 8. Net Farm and Household Income

Net income	Number	Percent
Less than $1,000	121	52
$ 1,000 to 1,999	54	23
2,000 to 2,999	26	11
3,000 to 3,999	14	6
4,000 to 4,999	8	3
5,000 to 9,999	9	4
10,000 and over	2	1
Total	234	100
No data	216	
Median	$900	

Level of Living

An attempt has been made to measure the level of living of the RFFRP households from the case records. Possession of a snowmobile, home freezer, water heater, television set, telephone, automobile, truck, tractor, milking machine, and hay baler was selected to measure the level of living. Data were available from most of the case records and indicate to some degree the number of conveniences the client families had.

Home freezers were owned by 69 percent of the project households. Only 74 percent of the RFFRP households had hot water heaters; 79 percent owned TV sets; 86 percent had a telephone.

Eighty-six percent had an automobile, compared with 84 percent of Vermont farms in 1969 (3). Only 36 percent had a truck, compared with 64 percent of all 1969 farms. Fewer client farms had one tractor, but more had two or more, compared with all Vermont farms in 1969.

Snowmobiles are becoming very popular. Sixteen percent of the client families owned one.

On the whole, RFFRP families apparently had a lower level of living than Vermont farm families in general, except in regard to automobiles, milking machines, and hay balers.

EMPLOYMENT

Major Activity

Members of client families were asked what type of activity they were engaged in most during the past year.

One-third (34 percent) attended school. Most of these lived at home; only 1 percent were away at school. Nearly one in five members (19 percent) operated the farm. Eighteen percent worked at housekeeping, probably mostly at home. Twelve percent were too young to work or go to school. One in 20 worked on the home farm as an unpaid family worker. The same proportion (5 percent) worked off the farm as a wage earner.

Secondary Activity

The most common secondary activity of RFFRP family members was unpaid work on the home farm (56 percent). Keeping house was the secondary activity of 13 percent (probably the girls of the family). Closely following were wage workers who worked off the farm (12 percent). Operating the farm was viewed as a secondary activity by 5 percent of the members.

Occupation

Farming was the primary occupation for 76 percent and the secondary occupation for 14 percent of adult members of client households. It was slightly outranked as a secondary occupation by unskilled labor. Unspecified off-farm work ranked second as a primary occupation, followed by unskilled labor and factory work. Many other occupations were represented, mostly of the blue-collar type.

A breakdown of occupations of the family heads shows a similar ranking of primary occupations. Farming topped the list for both male and female heads. Unskilled labor for males and factory work for females ranked second.

THE FARMS

From various data on the RFFRP households, about 415 were considered to be living on a farm of one type or another. Of the 376 farms for which data were available, 72 percent were active dairy farms.

Total acreage was given for 353 farms (Table 9). The average farm had 250 acres, or 29 acres less than the average Vermont farm reported by the 1969 Census of Agriculture (Table 10) (2). More acreage per farm could have increased income per farm if it were cropland.

Client farms averaged 27 milking-age cows (Table 11). This was 15 cows less than the 1969 Vermont census figure of 42 (Table 10). If they were good milk producers, more cows per farm could mean higher income for client farmers.

Farms had an average of 42 cows, heifers, and heifer calves (Table 12). The most common herd size (on almost one-third of the farms) was 30 to 49 head.

The value of all cattle on the farm ranged from less than $1,000 to $50,000 (Table 13). The average value per farm was $11,600, or $208 per head. On 45 percent of the farms, values ranged from $1,000 to $10,000.

Annual milk production per farm averaged 210,000 pounds (Table 14). More than half (53 percent) produced less than 200,000 pounds.

Average production per cow was 6,000 pounds--3,320 pounds less than the average for all Vermont cows, according to the USDA Statistical Reporting Service (5).

Thus one of the main problems faced by client farmers was extremely low-producing cows. Project aides work with farmers trying to correct this situation. They try to initiate better recordkeeping (including

Table 9. Total Acreage of the Farm

Acres	Farms	
	Number	Percent
Less than 10	3	1
10 to 49	24	7
50 to 69	8	2
70 to 99	12	3
100 to 139	41	12
140 to 179	48	14
180 to 219	71	20
220 to 259	28	8
260 to 299	25	7
300 to 339	23	6
340 to 379	21	6
380 to 419	11	3
420 to 499	13	4
500 to 699	15	4
700 to 999	10	3
Total	353	100
No response	97	
Average 250 acres		

Table 10. Some Farm Averages with Comparative Data from Other Sources

Item	RFFRP farms		Averages for all Vermont farms (1969)
	Number reporting	Average	
Acres per farm	353	250	279[a]
Number of cows	342	27	42[a]
All cattle and calves	349	42	80[a]
Value of cattle per head ($)	---	208	NA[b]
Milk production per cow (lbs.)	---	6,000	9,320[c]
Milk production per farm (lbs.)	263	210,000	429,000[d]
Total liabilities ($)	244	13,000	NA[b]

[a]Source: Census of Agriculture, 1969.

[b]Data not available.

[c]Source: USDA, SRS, Crop Reporting Board. 1971. Milk production, disposition, and income, 1969-70. Washington, D.C.

[d]Source: Market Administrator Federal Order No. 1. 1970. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire Milk Market Statistics for the Year 1969. Boston, Massachusetts.

Table 11. Total Number of Cows

Number of cows	Farms	
	Number	Percent
None	53	15
1 to 4	22	6
5 to 9	10	3
10 to 19	43	13
20 to 29	61	18
30 to 39	70	20
40 to 49	40	12
50 to 99	41	12
100 or more	2	1
Total	342	100
No response	108	
Average 27 cows		

Table 12. Total Number of All Cattle and Calves

Number of cattle	Farms	
	Number	Percent
None	32	9
Less than 10	24	7
10 to 19	25	7
20 to 29	33	9
30 to 39	53	16
40 to 49	52	16
50 to 59	42	12
60 to 69	29	8
70 to 79	19	5
80 to 89	14	4
90 to 99	8	2
100 or more	18	5
Total	349	100
No response	101	
Average 42 head		

Table 13. Value of All Cattle and Calves on Farms

Value of cattle ($1,000)	Farms	
	Number	Percent
No cattle	32	11
Less than 1	22	7
1 to 5	61	21
6 to 10	72	24
11 to 15	45	15
16 to 20	28	10
21 to 25	14	5
26 to 30	7	2
31 to 40	9	3
41 to 50	7	2
Total	297	100
No data	153	
Average per farm having cattle, $11,600		
Average per head 208		

Table 14. Annual Milk Production

Milk produced (1,000 lbs.)	Farms	
	Number	Percent
Less than 10	64	24
10 to 99	23	9
100 to 199	52	20
200 to 299	43	16
300 to 399	42	16
400 to 499	19	7
500 or more	20	9
Total	263	100
No data	187	
Average 210,000 lbs. per farm reporting		
Average per head 6,000 lbs.		

production per cow). They also recommend testing programs such as DHIA (Dairy Herd Improvement Association) to let the farmer know which cows are good producers. Then the farmer can cull low producers and replace them with better cows. The quality and quantity of feed influence milk production too. Aides try to improve both factors by suggesting better fertilization and other management practices.

Questions were asked about the general health of the dairy herd. Eighty-seven percent of the farmers listed herd health as good, 12 percent as fair, and only 1 percent as poor.

Most of the farmers (71 percent) had sold some cattle or calves the past year.

Management

Program workers were interested in the farmers' management practices and asked about the use of chemicals. We found that 45 percent used no chemical fertilizer at all. One-third used fertilizer on less than 16 percent of their acreage. Only 16 percent had used sprays or dust on their crops. The majority, 58 percent, said they had their soil tested for nutrient deficiencies. Sixty-nine percent had participated in the federal Agricultural Conservation Program.

Several questions concerned the dairy operation. One was whether a testing program was currently used to measure the amount of milk produced by each cow. Most farmers didn't use this sort of program. Only 25 percent used DHIA testing. Eleven percent of the farmers did their own sampling. A DHIA representative did the sampling for the remaining 14 percent.

Farmers were asked if they had a Soil Conservation Service farm plan and map. The majority, 57 percent, said they did.

Water Supply

An important resource on dairy farms is a pollution-free source of water. We found that 72 percent of the clients had a spring; 16 percent had a drilled well. One percent had both sources, and 10 percent had some other source of water. One percent had no water at all on the farm.

In answer to a question on adequacy and purity, 71 percent said their water supply was both adequate and tested. Twelve percent said it was adequate but not tested. Seven percent said it was adequate but only the household supply was tested. Two percent said it was adequate but only the barn supply was tested. Eight percent said their supply was not adequate.

Clients were asked how many ponds had been dug or impounded on their place. Sixty-four percent said they didn't have any. Twenty-two percent had one. The remainder had two or more ponds.

Buildings

Aides rated 93 percent of the farmhouses as adequate in size. Only 6 percent of the houses were described as inadequate. Two percent were rated as fair. The condition of the farmhouses was described as good in 60 percent of the cases, fair in 31 percent, and poor in 9 percent.

In regard to size of the main barn, 65 percent were rated adequate, 1 percent as fair, and 25 percent as inadequate. Concerning the condition of the main barn, 50 percent were rated as good, 25 percent as fair, and 16 percent as poor.

The farmer was asked if his milkhouse had been inspected and approved by the Health Department. In 14 percent of the 300 cases for which information was available, no milkhouse existed. Most of the remaining 257 (86 percent) said their milkhouse had been inspected and approved. We had no information on inspection or approval of 9 percent of the milkhouses. Only 5 percent had been inspected but not approved.

Only 30 percent of the farms had silos. Of these, nearly half (49 percent) were made of wood. One-third of the farms had a cement silo, 16 percent a trench silo, and 3 percent a tile silo. Concerning the condition of these silos, 87 percent were rated as good.

One-third of the farms had no shed or garage for storing machinery. Of those that did, 58 percent had adequate-sized sheds. Twenty-eight percent had sheds that were rated inadequate; 14 percent, fair. In regard to the condition of the machinery shed or garage, 45 percent were rated as fair, 41 percent as good, and 14 percent as poor.

Land Use

Farmers were asked about the use made of their farmland. One of the questions concerned the total tillable acreage. A majority of the farms (60 percent) had less than one-third of the land in tillable condition; 3 percent had none at all.

Nearly two-thirds of the farmers used less than 25 percent of the land for pasture. Fifteen percent used none at all, and 1 percent had between 85 and 100 percent of their land in pasture.

Farmers were also asked if they harvested any hay or silage crops this year. Eighty-four percent said they had harvested some hay. Seventeen percent had harvested and sold some hay. Of the 298 farmers

who had harvested some hay, the majority had less than one-third of their land in hay crops or silage. Only 28 percent had harvested corn; 1 percent had sold some. Of the 99 farmers who had harvested corn, the majority (78 percent) had planted it on less than 16 percent of their total acreage. Only 6 percent had any land in oats, rye, or other grains. Twenty-four percent had harvested potatoes this year; 2 percent had both harvested and sold potatoes.

A possible source of income is a market garden, but only 5 percent of the farmers had one. Only 16 percent operated a roadside stand. Nearly 75 percent had a home garden. Only 2 percent harvested any nursery or greenhouse products such as flower and vegetable seeds, plants, and bulbs.

Only 9 percent had harvested any berries this year. Two percent had sold some berries. Nuts or grapes were grown on 3 percent of the farms.

A sand or gravel pit is a possible source of income on farms, but only 10 percent had this resource.

Only 4 percent of the farmers rented any land to other people. One-third of the farmers rented some acreage from other people. The majority of these rented less than half of their farmland from other people.

Forest Products

When asked the total acreage of woodland on their farm, 13 percent had none. The majority (61 percent) had less than 46 percent of their total acreage in woodland.

Nineteen percent had sold some forest products during the year, including firewood, fuelwood, pulpwood, sawing or veneer logs, Christmas trees, wreaths, decorations, and evergreen brush. Only 12 percent had done any maple sugaring. Twenty-two percent said they had a potential for maple sugaring, but had not done any. The State Department of Forests and Parks has county foresters available to advise farmers on the care and use of the forest and in marketing the forest products. Only 30 percent had sought advice from their county forester.

Livestock Other Than Cattle

Twenty-six percent of the farms had one or more horses or ponies.

Chickens were found on 17 percent of the farms. Thirteen percent had them only for home use. Three percent had them for eggs to sell; 1 percent for meat to sell. One percent of the farms had turkeys, for home use only. Three percent of the farms had ducks: 2 percent for home use, 1 percent for sale. Geese were found on 2 percent of the farms, mostly for home use.

Four percent of the farms had sheep or lambs: 3 percent for home use, 1 percent for sale. Eighteen percent of the farms had hogs or pigs: 16 percent for home use, 2 percent for sale. Only 2 percent had any goats.

Equipment

Farmers were asked to list their farm equipment. Mechanization varied from 7 percent who had a silo unloader to 87 percent with one or more tractors (Table 15). Nearly one in four (23 percent) owned one tractor; 41 percent owned two tractors; 17 percent owned three; and 6 percent owned four.

Table 15. Equipment on Farms

Type of equipment	Number of farms reporting[a]	Percent having this item
Tractor	305	87
Automobile	316	86
Hay baler	305	79
Hay rake	233	74
Milking machines	233	73
Plow	230	73
Manure spreader	231	72
Hay mower	230	72
Vacuum pump	228	70
Bulk milk tank	309	69
Harrow	230	66
Hay elevator	230	51
Hay conditioner	300	41
Pickup truck	302	36
Other truck	287	36
Lime spreader	227	30
Barn cleaner	305	26
Forage harvester	303	26
Seeder	229	19
Forage wagon	230	18
Milk dumping station	230	17
Silo unloader	230	7

[a]Number for which information was available.

Most farmers (86 percent) owned an automobile. Most of those who didn't may have owned a truck that they also used for trips to town. Only 6 percent had neither auto nor truck.

Nearly 8 out of 10 farmers (79 percent) had a hay baler; 74 percent owned a hay rake.

Nearly three-fourths (73 percent) had milking machines; 73 percent had one or more plows.

Seven out of 10 (72 percent) of the farmers owned a manure spreader. The same percentage had a hay-mowing machine.

Nearly 7 out of 10 (69 percent) had a bulk milk tank.

Two-thirds owned one or more harrows. More than half (51 percent) had a hay elevator for lifting bales into the barn.

Farm Income and Expenses

Data on average monthly gross farm income from all sources was available for 213 farms (Table 16). The majority (58 percent) had monthly incomes of less than $1,051. The median income was $900.

Annual gross farm income from all sources was given for 235 farms (Table 17). Most farms (63 percent) had less than $16,000. More than one in four received less than $6,000. But 3 percent had a gross income of $41,000 or more.

Total annual farm expenses were given for 222 farms (Table 18). Their median expenses amounted to $10,000.

INDEBTEDNESS

Client families were asked to list their personal indebtedness or liabilities. Two-thirds of them had a real estate mortgage. Forty-eight percent had personal property indebtedness. Thirty-nine percent had personal notes outstanding. Thirty-seven percent had small bills. Twenty-five percent had outstanding grain bills. Only 9 percent had unpaid taxes. Families reported an average farm and nonfarm debt of $13,000.

Table 16. Average Monthly Gross Farm Income from All Sources

Income	Number	Percent
Up to $150	14	7
$ 151 to $ 250	13	6
251 to 350	25	12
351 to 450	11	5
451 to 550	13	6
551 to 1,050	46	22
1,051 to 1,550	35	16
1,551 to 2,050	22	10
2,051 to 2,550	13	6
2,551 to 3,050	12	6
3,051 to 4,050	4	2
4,051 to 6,050	2	1
6,051 to 8,050	3	1
Total	213	100
No data	237	
Median $900		

Table 17. Total Annual Gross Farm Income from All Sources

Income	Number	Percent
$ 1,000 to $ 5,000	63	26
6,000 to 10,000	47	20
11,000 to 15,000	39	17
16,000 to 20,000	28	12
21,000 to 25,000	24	10
26,000 to 30,000	14	6
31,000 to 35,000	10	4
36,000 to 40,000	4	2
41,000 and over	6	3
Total	235	100
No data	215	
Median $11,000		

Table 18. Total Annual Farm Expenses

Amount	Number	Percent
$ 1,000 to $ 5,000	71	32
6,000 to 10,000	46	21
11,000 to 15,000	42	19
16,000 to 20,000	25	11
21,000 to 25,000	16	7
26,000 to 30,000	10	5
31,000 to 35,000	4	2
36,000 to 40,000	3	1
Over $40,000	5	2
Total	222	100
No data	228	
Median $10,000		

INTERESTS OF FAMILY MEMBERS

Most farmers were content to remain on the farm and operate it. Sixty percent were not interested in off-farm employment. But 20 percent said they would like full-time off-farm employment. Another 20 percent were interested in part-time work off the farm.

When asked if they would sell or rent their farm if they could find off-farm employment, 92 percent said "No." Five percent said they would sell, and 1 percent would rent their farm.

Thirty-seven percent of the wives and female heads of households were interested in all aspects of farming; 17 percent liked most aspects of it (Table 19). Only 7 percent expressed an interest in off-farm work. Thirteen women operated their own farm and said they liked it. Only 5 percent indicated they didn't like farming. Most women were most interested in some aspect of the farm or home.

Of the 49 teenage boys who responded, a majority (62 percent) said they were interested in farming. Most of the remaining 38 percent seemed interested in off-farm activities. Twelve percent expressed an interest in education for nonfarm employment. The same proportion were not interested in farming but didn't say what their interest was.

The oldest daughters were asked about their interests and desires. Of the 30 who responded, only six expressed an interest in farm life. Eleven were interested in education for nonfarm employment. Four wanted off-farm work but didn't specify what type. Three were interested in secretarial training.

Table 19. Interests of Wife (or Female Head of Household)

Interest expressed	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Interested in all aspects of farming (interested in everything)	109	37
Likes most aspects of farming	49	17
Content and independent	23	8
Off-farm work	21	7
Doesn't like farming	14	5
Runs the farm and likes it	13	4
To pay bills, reduce debt, discouraged because of money problems	10	3
Keeping house	8	3
A weekend away from home ("a break")	7	2
Repairing and improving the home	7	2
More education	6	2
Gardening for the home	5	2
Garden for roadside stand	5	2
Health	4	1
Cut down on off-farm work so she can work on the house	3	1
No longer farming, wish they were	3	1
Cut down on outside work so she can work on the farm	2	1
Knitting, painting, other handcrafts	2	1
Garden and poultry	1	--[a]
Poultry	1	--[a]
Total	293	100
No data	98	

[a]Less than 0.51 percent.

Nearly half (45 percent) of the 20 teenage daughters responding said they liked farming. Almost one in three was interested in educational opportunities. Secretarial training was most popular. One in 10 would like education beyond the high school level. Extension Service 4-H activities claimed the interest of 15 percent of the teenage daughters.

An overwhelming majority (75 percent) of 16 preteenage children liked farm life. Nearly one in five (19 percent) expressed an interest in 4-H youth work. Education for nonfarm skills claimed the interest of 6 percent.

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies illustrate the type of family enrolled under the project and the procedure followed in working with client families:

Case No. 1 was a 45-year-old farmer who had been operating for 25 years a dairy farm that had been in the family for three generations. The farmer was in poor health and suffered from a back disability that was forcing him out of farming.

His wife liked the farm and rural life. She would like the farm even better if it were a paying operation. There were six children in the family.

This family's net income for 1968 was only $847.91. The farmer had not felt well for some time. The farm work had lagged to the point where there was not nearly enough income. Their life was most discouraging.

Analysis of the farm resources indicated a good potential for agriculture. The land needed rebuilding to improve crop quality and quantity. Guidance was needed in herd management and farm record-keeping. Some woodland offered a good source of supplemental income.

The RFFRP was able to assist this family in the following ways:

The farmer and his wife were each given a medical examination. Then the farmer had a special examination of his back. His wife had a dental checkup, followed by extensive dental improvements. The farmer had an operation for spinal fusion.

The project aide helped establish production records for the herd. He also provided followup guidance on agency participation. As the result of referrals to other agencies:

Soil tests were made.

The county forester provided training in woodland management and the planting of Christmas trees, and taught the wife how to make Christmas wreaths.

The Social Welfare Department provided food stamps and Medicaid.

The Soil Conservation Service provided a soils map for the farm and recommendations for proper land use.

The Student Assistance Corporation provided nurse's aide training for the oldest daughter.

The Extension agricultural engineer helped with drawing up plans for a barn.

The county agricultural agent gave training and advice in herd management, reseeding and crops, farm recordkeeping and improved feeding and milking practices.

The farmer signed up for approved practices and services under the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service program.

The wife started a training program in journalism.

Case No. 2 was a farmer, age 40, who had only 8 years of formal education. He had been farming all his adult life. His wife, age 38, had lived on a farm all her life. She was very interested in all aspects of farming and thought the farm was the best place to raise her five children.

Both the farmer and his wife were served by project vocational rehabilitation services. The farmer had a back disability. The wife had a kidney disorder and a nervous condition. Each needed extensive dental work.

The farmer was interested in taking a high school equivalency course and training in Christmas tree growing, welding and machinery repair, and herd management.

The farm would be classified as a good dairy farm. It had good roughage but production was low. Milk production was also low. The farmer needed training in woodland management. The buildings were in good condition. The financial setup was good but income was low.

Services provided for this family were as follows:

RFFRP provided both the farmer and his wife with a physical examination. Both visited a dentist for a checkup. The farmer had an operation for varicose veins and treatment for his back trouble. He also had some dental work done. The RFFRP aide provided followup on management training, development of a Christmas tree enterprise, and training in milk production improvement.

The Vermont Extension Service, through its county agent, also helped with the farm rehabilitation. He provided advice in improving management practices and roughage and crop production. He showed the farmer the need for better farm records and instructed the wife in recordkeeping.

The county forester provided training and assistance in woodland management and Christmas tree planting. He showed the farmer's wife how to make Christmas wreaths.

The State Department of Education provided an opportunity for the farmer to enroll in a high school equivalency course.

The farmer signed up with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service for fertilizer, lime, and other approved practices.

The Department of Employment Security made it possible for the farmer to enroll in courses in welding and herd management. This was through their Manpower Development and Training Program.

The Department of Social Welfare signed the family up for food stamps and Medicaid.

Case No. 3 was a 54-year-old farmer who had begun operating his dairy farm in 1968. He had a heart condition that required daily attention and treatment.

His wife felt that their farm operation had been limited because of lack of funds. She was happy with farm life and believed it was the best environment for their five children. She thought they should have started farming at an earlier age and wished her husband had stayed home to farm rather than having worked in a shop for 18 years.

The farm had not been actively worked for several years.

The following services were provided:

RFFRP provided a general medical examination for the farmer, followed by treatment as prescribed by the family doctor.

The project aide provided followup guidance on the farm plans.

The county Extension agent trained the farmer in herd management, recordkeeping, crop production, and land use.

The county forester trained the farmer in woodland management and advised him to cut pulpwood for supplemental income.

The Farmers Home Administration refinanced the farm for a loan of $46,000 and reduced monthly payments by $25. The FHA also loaned the farmer $2,500 for buying farm machinery.

The farmer signed up for lime and fertilizer with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

The Soil Conservation Service made a soils map for the farm and recommended proper land use.

Case No. 4 was a young farmer, 30 years old, who had started on this farm about a year before being contacted by this project. He

was having trouble with the quality of his milk. The creamery fieldman asked the program aide to visit the farmer to see if he could discover the source of his difficulty. The creamery had stopped buying the farmer's milk but later started taking it again. However, if the bacterial count rose again, the farmer would lose his market. He also had a high debt load and his payments were excessive.

The farmer had only an eighth grade education and his wife, a ninth grade. They had three children, all under 7 years old. The wife loved farm life and enjoyed helping with the farm work. Both had pleasing personalities and were responsive to suggestions. They felt they were in good health except that the farmer mentioned he had hemorrhoids. Their net income was $2,814. Their buildings were in good condition and of adequate size. The grounds were neat and well kept. A home garden supplied fresh vegetables for their table.

The couple's aims were to pay for the farm, to make a good living, and to provide a good education for their children. The farmer expressed interest in learning welding and farm machinery repair. His wife was not interested in any training at the time. She had her hands full with her housework and the care of their three children.

Recommendations by the project aide resulted in the following accomplishments:

Their inadequate milking machine vacuum pump was replaced by a larger one, and a vacuum gauge was placed near the pump. These additions made possible the maintenance of a correct vacuum in the milking pipeline. The result was a decrease in mastitis and a significant drop in the bacteria count of the milk. This helped to maintain the farmer's market for his milk.

The farmer was referred to a lime company and had his soil tested for lime needs to help increase his forage production.

The farmer was paying too much income tax because of poor records. The aide suggested he carry a pencil and paper and record every purchase. Better recordkeeping resulted in lower income taxes.

A referral to the Soil Conservation Service resulted in an updated farm plan.

The county Extension agent was called in to evaluate the farm operation. He recommended that the farmer keep records on the milk production of individual cows. The records would allow him to cull low producers and to grain all cows according to their production.

The county forester evaluated the farm woodland as a possible source of additional income.

The farmer started working with a veterinarian on a program of mastitis control in his herd.

At the end of 15 months, improvements had reached the point where the aide felt he could no longer help this farmer, and the case was closed.

The vocational rehabilitation counselor had closed the case a month earlier because no employment disability had been discovered. This example shows the benefits a low-income farmer can receive from the program even though no employment disability is found.

While working with the farm family, the project counselor had arranged for the farmer to have a general medical exam and an orthopedic exam. Since neither exam disclosed an employment disability, the case was closed.

Case No. 5. This older farmer, age 56, operated a 125-acre farm (65 acres tillable) with 24 milking cows. He had been operating this farm for 17 years.

The household consisted of the farmer, his wife, an older brother, and four children. The oldest child, a girl of 17, was mentally retarded. The other three children, all boys, were 13, 8, and 6. The older brother (age 65) helped with the farm work as an unpaid family worker.

The farmer and his wife were both interested in farming and had no outside interests. She would like to further her education but felt she had plenty to do at home, caring for her children.

This family faced many problems. The farm income was too small to support the family, so the farmer had to seek off-farm employment. The farmer had failing eyesight and defective hearing. The wife needed dental care. They had a heavy debt load. The house, although in fair condition, was too small for the family. The spring which supplied their water needed to be enclosed in a concrete box or large tile. To supplement their farm income, the farmer worked at a factory quite a distance from the farm. He had to rise at 4 a.m. to do the milking and get to the factory by 7. He arrived home about 5 p.m. to do his barn chores after a full day's work. Very little was left of the milk check after deductions for debts. Work at the factory was not steady. The farmer was finally forced to sell his farm and move to a nonfarm dwelling.

The family was enrolled in RFFRP. Both the farmer and his wife received complete physical examinations. The farmer had a special eye examination, was fitted with glasses and, later, a hearing aid and dental plates.

The family was enrolled in the food stamp program.

The farmer's wife received dental care which included extraction and full dentures. She later developed appendicitis and had to go to the hospital. While she was there, kidney stones were discovered and were removed surgically. Referral to Social Welfare resulted in payment of these bills and provision of some funds for the care of the mentally retarded girl.

To top off their troubles, their doctor advised the farmer to quit working. The doctor applied for Social Security benefits for the farmer because of his disability. The farmer continued to work part time for nearby farmers to supplement his income.

The counselor suggested the retarded child might be helped with some form of special training. But her mother wouldn't cooperate for fear the girl would be taken from her.

This family was finally compelled to rely entirely upon social welfare, supplemented by whatever the farmer could earn from part-time work. The main accomplishment of being enrolled in RFFRP was probably the improved health of the farmer and his wife.

Case No. 6. This was a reactivated case from the earlier Farm Family Project. The farmer (age 53) was married and had two boys (age 16 and 22). He had only an eighth grade education; his wife had two years of high school. Their older boy had quit school after the eighth grade. The younger was a junior in high school. The older boy helped his father with their 210-acre, 67-cow farm. The farm buildings were of adequate size and in good condition. The area was neat and well kept. The land was well fertilized. A good garden supplied vegetables for the family. A new milking parlor had recently been built.

In spite of their efforts, the family income amounted to only $2,124. The farmer had a serious back ailment which affected his legs. He had an operation but still had to wear a brace at times. His wife had high blood pressure.

After RFFRP came into being, this case was reactivated. The project aide explained the new program, but the farmer and his wife were skeptical. They thought there would be a lot of red tape with little real help or accomplishment. During the conversation, the problem of ditching for farm drainage came up. This was being handled by the Soil Conservation Service, but the farmer was not satisfied with the location of the ditch. The aide said he would ask the SCS man to call and go over the plan with the farmer. This sparked the farmer's interest and he cooperated in filling out the case history form. At a later date, the project counselor visited the farm and explained the vocational rehabilitation program. The farmer enrolled but his wife was still very skeptical. As a result of enrollment in RFFRP, both the farmer and his wife had complete medical exams.

An analysis of the farm operation brought forth the following recommendations by the aide:

A new silo should be built. The farmer agreed to this and made plans to build one.

The herd should be put on a testing program so production of individual cows might be evaluated. This was agreed upon by the farmer and he planned the installation of weigh jars in his milking parlor.

The farmer had never had an SCS plan for his farm. He said he would appreciate such a plan, so he was referred to the Soil Conservation Service.

Additional barn space was needed for dry cows and heifers, so plans were made for an addition.

The farm woodlot was evaluated as a possible source of income.

It was recommended that the farmer cut spruce and hemlock for sale, as time permitted. This the farmer agreed to.

The aide recommended that the farmer and his older son take a course in farm machinery repair and welding. They decided to postpone action on this.

It was suggested the farmer's wife might take a course in Christmas wreath production to supplement their income. She said she wasn't interested at present because of lack of time from housework.

On a later visit by the aide, the farmer's wife expressed dissatisfaction with the results of the project. She apparently had expected more medical assistance. She said if they wanted any more physical exams or followups they would take care of it themselves. She further stated that they had never received any good advice from government agencies. The aide said he was there to help them with their farm problems, to which the wife replied that she felt they could handle their own problems.

A subsequent visit by both the counselor and the aide brought out the fact that the doctor, to whom the wife was sent, had not recommended further testing or treatment. The wife felt she should have had further testing. The counselor explained that his hands were tied without recommendations from a doctor. He did authorize her to visit another doctor and said the project would pay the bill. This visit served to clear up misunderstandings and made all concerned feel better. However, the case finally had to be closed because the clients refused further service.

Not all cases received complete cooperation from the clients, as the above illustrates. Following is another case of lack of cooperation by the client.

Case No. 7. This was a relatively young farmer (age 37) who had bought the farm from his father only 3 years before contact with RFFRP. He had three children: a boy, age 12; a girl, age 11; and another boy, age 10.

The farm (really two in one) consisted of 216 acres, of which 100 were tillable, 70 in pasture, and 45 in woodland. Livestock included 33 cows and 29 heifers and heifer calves. There was a good family garden.

The family lived in a mobile home, as the farmer's parents had the use of the farmhouse. The mobile home was in fair condition, but inadequate in size. The main barn was too small, although in fair condition. The farmer had recently received a loan from the Farmers Home Administration for building an addition to his barn and for buying additional cattle.

The farmer's wife liked farm life, but wanted to see their farm income increased. In 1968, their net income was only $1,500. She and her husband worked hard, but just couldn't seem to get ahead. "Just when things look good, something seems to happen to knock out the bottom," she said.

The children liked farm life and said they wouldn't want to live in a village.

During the course of a year's work under this project, the farmer was referred to the county Extension agent for training in farm record-keeping and a check of his milking system. A referral to the Soil Conservation Service resulted in a farm map and conservation plan. The farmer's wife was put on the mailing list for Extension Home Demonstration literature. On a visit toward the end of this period, the aide encountered some hostility on the part of the farmer's wife. Apparently, this was the outgrowth of their dealings with FHA. They were to have had their barn addition completed before the previous November, but hadn't finished it on time. This may have been at the root of the problem. Apparently, there had been some friction between the farmer and FHA. Anyway, on this particular visit, the wife started quizzing the aide about RFFRP. She thought there must be some catch to the program, since it was sponsored by the government. They also thought there must be some connection with FHA. The aide assured them there was no connection between the two. He further explained that the objectives of this program were to improve the health of the farmer and to help educate and train him and his family. After further discussion, the farmer agreed to a physical exam.

About 6 months later, the aide visited the farm to inquire about the farmer's physical exam and to discuss any farm problems he might be facing. The farmer and his wife were still suspicious and thought there must be some "catch" to the program. He indicated he wasn't interested in having the physical checkup. The aide again explained

the purpose of the program, but to no avail. The farmer said he might be interested in enrolling in the program "sometime." The aide left after telling them to call him if he could be of any further assistance.

This case was placed on inactive status because of the skepticism of the farmer and because he wouldn't cooperate in having the physical examination which was needed to determine his eligibility for service under the project.

Case No. 8. The 63-year-old farm operator was a widow living alone on a 160-acre hillside, rocky farm, of which 60 acres were tillable, 55 woodland, 40 native open pasture, and the balance wasteland. The barn and dwelling unit were in fair condition. The dairy herd consisted of 23 head--10 milkers and the balance in young stock. The net farm income of less than $1,000 was supplemented by Social Security payments. A high proportion of the Social Security payment was applied toward the farm indebtedness of $6,000.

This female farm operator faced many management problems. The farm operation and net farm income were not large enough to support her financially. The large indebtedness was a drain on income from off-farm sources. The herd health needed to be improved. Recordkeeping was almost nonexistent. The herd watering system was obsolete. Land drainage needed to be improved, and a barn cleaner was needed.

She was enrolled in RFFRP. She was put in contact with the following agencies: County Extension Office, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, local bank, Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System, Employment Security Administration, and Department of Education. The following assistance was rendered: complete medical and dental examinations were provided; dentures were received; and glasses were furnished. The project provided counseling and training in recordkeeping, herd management (including herd health), roughage feeding recommendations, and the use and value of laborsaving equipment.

Cooperating agencies provided service and training in the following areas: the county agent helped her start a system of herd records and farm accounts, provided guidance in herd management, and assisted in income tax filing. SCS provided an evaluation on land drainage and pond construction. Arrangements were made for ASCS cost-share program for lime and fertilizer. The local bank assisted in financing a mobile home. Training was provided in Christmas tree harvesting and wreath-making.

Although no major farm management program was undertaken for this elderly widow, the RFFRP program was instrumental in introducing laborsaving equipment (gutter cleaner and water bowls) and made it feasible for the client to continue to fulfill her desire to farm for several more years. This client's dignity and the right for independence cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

Case No. 9. This 165-acre farm was being operated by a 51-year-old woman with the assistance of a hired man, and a totally disabled husband who entered into some of the farm management decisions.

The farm consisted of an antiquated barn with a wooden stable. Milk production was less than 6,000 pounds per cow for the 18 milkers. Of the 165 acres, 60 were tillable, 46 in native pasture, and 60 in woodland. The farm had been in the family for over 100 years and the present owner had no intention of selling. The following problems were noted: low milk production per cow, poor feeding and culling practices, need to increase roughage production, outdated milking techniques and equipment, lack of lime and fertilizer, and poor recordkeeping. Under the RFFRP both the husband and wife were given general medical exams, dental care, eye glasses, and otological and orthopedic exams.

Education and training were provided in herd management, including herd culling, breeding, grain feeding, and roughage feeding. Milking equipment and milking techniques were reviewed numerous times. The county agent assisted in income tax work and made suggestions on the roughage program and general farm management problems. ASCS provided lime and mixed fertilizers.

The RFFRP program resulted in improved management practices and increased production per cow.

SUMMARY

This report presents benchmark information about client families and their farms during the enrollment period in the Vermont Rural and Farm Family Rehabilitation Project.

Data were collected from 450 family case histories. These homes included 2,089 members. An analysis of the records revealed the following highlights:

Most of the families lived in northern Vermont, the majority within 2 1/2 miles of a village. The largest group began operating their farms during the 1960's.

Client families averaged 4.64 persons each, or about one person more than the average Vermont farm family. Most of the family members were males; the sex ratio was 116 males per 100 females.

In nearly two-thirds of the homes at least one member had a recognized disability or employment handicap. Back trouble was the most common complaint. Examination by a physician showed that dental problems were the leading cause of disability.

Nine years was the median schooling received by family members age 25 and over. Only 14 percent of all household members had received any special form of education or training. Only one in four of the households had one or more members interested in such training.

The median age of members of client families was about 4 years lower than that for the state's farm population as a whole.

The agency mentioned most frequently by client families before contact with the RFFRP was the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the USDA. After association with this project, the county Extension agent in agriculture had the greatest number of contacts on referral by the program aides. The ASCS then ranked second.

Most referrals were general, for the good of both the family and the farm. These were most likely to be for consultation or evaluation. Referrals to the RFFR Project were physically (or mentally) rehabilitated and placed in employment in 32 percent of the cases.

Three out of four of the families contacted had an income of less than $2,000 a year. Their level of living, as measured by possession of certain equipment, was generally lower than the average Vermont farm family.

Eighty-seven percent of the male household heads were employed in farming. A similar proportion of female heads was engaged in farming.

The average farm contained 250 acres and had 42 head of cattle, 27 of which were milk cows. Annual milk production per farm averaged 162,000 pounds and 6,000 pounds per cow.

Most families had a water supply that was both adequate and tested for purity.

Most farm homes were of adequate size and in good condition. Most barns and machinery sheds were adequate in size and in fair to good condition.

The largest group of farms had between 16 and 25 percent of their land in tillable condition. This was most likely used for hay or silage. Less than 16 percent was in pasture. Between 26 and 34 percent was in woodland.

Two out of three families had mortgages on their farm or home. Nearly half owed money on personal property. More than one-third had outstanding personal notes. One in four had outstanding grain bills. The average of all debts amounted to $13,000.

Most farmers were content to remain on their farm and operate it. Only two in five were interested in either full- or part-time off-farm work.

The majority of the women also preferred farm life. The same was true of teenage boys and preteenage children. Older daughters preferred off-farm employment.

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